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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000429

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SUBJECT: PM MALIKI FRUSTRATED WITH THE SLOW PACE OF THE BSP

BAGHDAD 00000429 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S/REL MNF-I) SUMMARY: On February 5, Prime Minister Maliki told the Ambassador and MNF-I Commanding General Casey that he was frustrated with the slow pace of the Baghdad Security Plan (BSP). Maliki said that our actions have not yet lived up to our statements on the BSP, and noted that Iraqis are growing increasingly impatient with a situation in which terrorists continue to wreck havoc. Maliki said he does not want any more delays in the start of the plan. In the next few days, he said he would like to see the Baghdad Operational Command fully staffed, all checkpoints manned, all barriers fortified, and all commanders and forces in place and operational. He requested formal assurances from Casey and the Ministry of Defense that he can exercise full command and control of the Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF). He said that for operations within Baghdad he wanted the chain of command for the ISOF to go through Baghdad Operational Commander Lieutenant General Aboud instead of Minister of Defense Abdul Qader, while ISOF operations outside of Baghdad should continue to fall under the command and control of the Ministry of Defense. The Ambassador and Casey agreed that Maliki's frustrations were justified. Casey recommended that Maliki take his message to 'urgently and fully implement BSP' to the security ministers and ISF commanders as it was their slowness in occupying their sectors that was holding up the plan. Casey also provided a status report on the plan's various elements, illustrating the progress that had so far been made. Casey said MNF-I had turned full command and control of the ISOF over to the MoD on January 1 and that the Prime Minister could exercise command of the forces. At the close of the meeting, Maliki asked for the Ambassador's help in expelling the MEK terrorist organization from Iraq. END SUMMARY.

Maliki Wants Action Now

¶2. (C/REL MNF-I) In a February 5 meeting with the Ambassador and General Casey, Maliki said he was disappointed with the slow rollout of the Baghdad Security Plan, especially after all the publicity that the plan has received over recent weeks. He said that the strong statements and commitments about the plan had raised the Iraqi public's expectations and that these expectations were not being met. Maliki asked Casey for no further delays, stressing the need to complete manning and begin operations as soon as possible.

¶3. (C/REL MNF-I) The Ambassador and Casey told Maliki they understood his frustration, assuring him the BSP will be fully operational within days. Casey recommended Maliki take his message to BSP commanders, stressing to them that Iraq's

future is at stake and that they need to treat this mission with a sense of urgency. Maliki agreed, saying that he would attend the February 6 BSP commander's meeting. He also said he intended to begin visiting Iraqi forces in the streets.

¶4. (C/REL MNF-I) Casey reminded Maliki that while the BSP may not be in full swing, successful operations against the enemy continue in Baghdad. Casey pointed to the joint operation against a car bomb (VBIED) network that had taken place two days before in south Baghdad. He said the bomb maker was killed along with at least seven of his top associates. Maliki agreed this was a great strike against "Shia Ba'athists," and went on to cite two further examples of success by ISF in recent days. Both involved locating large caches of sophisticated weaponry, one in Abu Ghraib and the other in a Baghdad satellite television station.

Status of the 28 Barrier Checkpoints and Barriers

¶5. (C/REL MNF-I) Maliki told Casey that the Baghdad Commander LTG Aboud reported to him that the 28 barrier checkpoints for the BSP are still unmanned, the barriers themselves are not complete, and not all checkpoints have adjacent trailers for the forces. Casey pushed back, reporting 27 of the 28 are manned and 20 of the 27 are operating as joint Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police checkpoints. According to Casey, only one barrier checkpoint remained unmanned. As for the barriers, Casey assured Maliki that they are largely intact. There are reportedly three or four breaches, but he assured Maliki that these would be fixed. Casey also said that trailers for checkpoint forces had been in place since September, but many were in need of renovation because Iraqi forces had not properly maintained them. CG Casey said he would ask MND-B forces to assist with their rehabilitation.

Status of Additional Force Flow into Baghdad

BAGHDAD 00000429 002.2 OF 002

¶6. (C/REL MNF-I) Maliki asked why the additional security forces that were designated for the BSP have not arrived, as well as why some that had shown up were without proper weaponry. Casey said that the U.S. brigade from Kuwait had arrived and was in place and operational. Casey said the problem of additional ISF lay with the Iraqi Army. While Iraqi Army forces are present in eight of the nine districts, most are not at their planned strength. Maliki said he would contact the Iraqi Ground Force Command to correct the problem. Casey then outlined the IA manning status of each district. (NOTE: As of February 4, it is estimated that approximately 63% of the additional Iraqi security forces are in place. END NOTE)

- Rashid: all five planned battalions in place
- Mansor: four out of five planned battalions in place
- Karkh: one out of three planned battalions in place
- Kadamiyah: two out of four planned battalions in place
- Adhamiya: one out of three planned battalions in place
- New Baghdad: two out of four planned battalions in

place

- Rusafa: one out of three planned battalions in place
- Karada: not given
- Sadr City: none of the three planned battalions in

place.

As for weaponry, Casey assured Maliki that most Iraqi units were outfitted, adding that those that are not soon will be.

Status of Iraqi Special Forces (ISOF)

¶7. (C/REL MNF-I) Maliki reported that Minister of Defense Abdul Qader told him that he could not exercise command of the ISOF because MNF-I still maintains command and control of

them. CG Casey denied this, noting that the GOI has had full command and control since January 1. Casey said all Maliki needed was to telephone Abdul Qader and direct him to carry out an operation. Maliki asked CG Casey to relay this fact to Abdul Qader as soon as possible; Maliki expects he will rely heavily on the ISOF for operations under the Baghdad Security Plan. (NOTE: In a meeting later that night with the Ambassador, Abdul Qader said he needs formal notification from CG Casey about the transfer of command and control. This meeting will be reported septel. END NOTE).

¶18. (C/REL MNF-I) Maliki further requested that for operations within Baghdad he be allowed to exert command and control of ISOF through Baghdad Commander Lieutenant General Aboud. Command and control for all operations outside of Baghdad would still go through the Minister of Defense. Casey said he would review this proposal and get back to the PM.

Maliki Wants MEK out of Iraq

¶19. (S/REL MNF-I) Maliki requested the Ambassador to assist his government in expelling the unpredictable and volatile Mujahedin e-Khalq (MeK) from Iraq. He stressed he could not allow this 'terrorist group' to remain on Iraqi soil. The group is increasing its threats against Ministers and continues to make public anti-GOI statements. He said the group is as dangerous as Saddam's former military and should be sent back to Iran -- where Tehran has promised to grant pardons to all. The Ambassador agreed to discuss the issue in more detail after consulting with USG subject matter experts.
KHALILZAD